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BOROUGH of CHARD

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year ending 31st December, 1951

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS:

Medical Officer of Health:

A. M. McCALL,
L.M.S.S.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., C.P.H., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector:

P. H. WEBB,
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BOROUGH OF CHARD

Annual Report of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Chard.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Report for the year 1951.

My Report shows that the work of the Public Health Department was in the main satisfactory. The extension of the sewage disposal works was completed and marks the close of the very unhappy chapter in the department's work. 1951 also saw the disappearance of the squatters' camp in Furnham Road. This has been a black spot in Chard since the war and the Council have had a very difficult time in re-housing the dwellers there. I regret that there has been no improvement in the school dental service in Chard and the town remains an "uncovered" area. So far there has been no sign of improvement in the situation. The County Council's plans for the erection of a dental clinic in Chard have been shelved. Some of the schools have not received a routine dental inspection since December, 1948.

The form of my Report remains unchanged as far as possible. The text has been kept free from tables for ease of reading. However, I hope reference will be made to the Appendices for only then can the full volume of work which the Health Department carries out each year be appreciated.

I am, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A. M. McCALL,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Population

The Registrar General gives the estimated population of Chard for the mid-year 1951 as 5,251. This is a slight decrease on the previous year. Appendix A, Table 1 shows the chief statistics for the town.

Birth Rate

The Birth Rate for the year was 13.7. This is less than last year and considerably less than the 18.9 figure for 1949. It is also below 15.5, the figure for England and Wales as a whole. Details are shown in Appendix A, Table 2.

Death Rate

Chief causes of death are shown in Appendix A, Table 3. The rate of 14.7 per thousand is higher than last year and above the figure of 12.5 for England and Wales as a whole during the same period.

Infant Mortality

Two children died within four weeks of birth. There was one still birth during 1951.

Maternal Mortality

I am pleased to report that there was no case of maternal death during the year.

Social Conditions

The social services remained unchanged during the year and the unemployment figure remained low throughout.

SECTION B

General Provision of Health Services in the Area

The administration of the local services worked smoothly throughout the year, the only alteration being that I no longer attend as medical officer to the Chard Child Welfare Clinic, an assistant Medical Officer of the County Council has relieved me of these duties.

Infant Welfare Clinic

Clinics are held every first and third Tuesday at the Recreation Club. A total of 831 children and 706 mothers attended during the year. This is a considerable fall in attendance, the corresponding figures being 1,360 children and 1,144 mothers in 1950. This is disappointing and it is hoped that in my next report I will be able to tell you that the numbers have reached

their previous high figure. I regret this change in administration because previously I first saw the children when they attended the Child Welfare Clinic, I then examined them in the Nursery school and Infant school, again in the Junior school and finally when they left the Secondary Modern School at the age of fifteen. By that time I had a very thorough knowledge of their past history. Full details of the work done at the Clinic will be seen in Appendix B, Table 1. My thanks are due to Mrs. Daniel and her Committee for the able way in which it has been conducted and to the District Nurses who have made every effort to ensure its success.

Maternity Services

No routine official ante-Natal Clinics are held in Chard but the District Nurses hold unofficial clinics at their house. This is not ideal but there is no other place available. The nurses are responsible for home deliveries. In cases where they consider it necessary the private doctor is consulted and he attends the confinement at their request. Cases needing hospitalisation for any reason are sent to Taunton, Crewkerne or Yeovil, where maternity beds are available.

Home Nursing

This is mainly carried out by the District Nurses. I do not think it has been realised in the past how much work the District Nurses do in the district and for this reason I have drawn up a special table to give some idea of their numerous duties and the number of occasions on which their help is given. Their work is often unspectacular and frequently carried out when other people are asleep or sitting round their fires in winter. I think we should remember them and the immense amount of good which they do. In addition to attendance at school medical inspections and welfare clinics, they did 6,628 domicilary visits.

Health Visiting

The District Nurses carry out health visiting in Chard and also attend all medical inspections in this capacity. They are responsible for following up all cases of defect discovered by the doctor and ensuring that children keep appointments which are made. A special health visitor visits all T.B. cases and is present at the Tuberculosis Clinics held by Dr. Pascall.

Immunisation

This is done by the general practitioners, by the doctor at the Child Welfare Clinic and by myself in the schools. The numbers being immunised in Chard are satisfactory. During the last few years combined immunisation against Whooping Cough and Diphtheria has been practised at the Child Welfare Clinic and although I have no exact figures to prove its value, the District Nurses have reported to me that in families where older children had whooping cough many of the younger immunised children escaped or had only a slight cough.

Vaccination

Vaccination is carried out by the general practitioner and by the doctor at the Clinic. 165 were done in Chard this year, 36 being done at the Clinic.

Tuberculosis Clinic

This is organised by Dr. Pascall, the area chest physician, and is held at Chard Sanatorium. Follow-up work is carried out by Mrs. Pitt, Health Visitor.

Homeless and Aged

Some aged people are housed in Harvey's Homes and others at Sunnylands, adjacent to the Sanatorium. In no case was it necessary to enforce aged people to go into hospital during the year.

Day Nursery

The Nursery in Chard has been greatly appreciated for many years and this is proved by the fact that there is always a waiting list. The Matron has always been careful only to accept children in whose case there is a definite need for admission. Unfortunately, with the economy drive there is a great danger of this school being closed and possibly will not appear in next year's report.

Home Help Service

The County Home Help Service has continued its good work during the year. Each household requesting help is visited by the area organiser who assesses the amount and type of help required and provides suitable persons to carry it out. This has proved invaluable.

Ambulance Service

This service, provided by the County Council and ably administered locally by Divisional Superintendent E. F. Brooks, was in constant use during the year. Details will be seen in Appendix B, Table III.

School Medical Service

Appendix B, Table IV shows details of all children inspected during the year. The routine inspection of all children entering school life, from the change to the primary to the secondary school and finally when leaving school, is of the utmost importance. Early detection of any abnormality enables it to be much more easily corrected with the result that by the time children leave school they have generally overcome their

defects and are as fit as it is possible to make them for the rigours of adult life. This, together with school dinners and free milk, has produced children who are second to none in any country.

School Dental Service

I regret I am unable to report any progress. There is still no school dental service in Chard and at the moment the outlook is bleak. The County Council have a scheme for erecting a dental clinic near the Council Offices but owing to the economy campaign this has been shelved and Chard children are still without any dental service.

Children and Young Persons Act

One case of parental neglect was brought before the court during the year. The parents were placed on probation and the children removed to a County home until such time as the parents had provided a satisfactory environment to which the children will be allowed to return.

I, as Medical Officer of Health, inspected a large number of children during the year as to fitness for employment under the County Bye-Laws. These Bye-Laws cover the hours and type of work which children attending school may perform, and they are always subject to medical examination.

Ophthalmic Services

The County Service for children continues to work satisfactorily and the supply of spectacles for children and adults was satisfactory throughout the year.

Orthopædic Service

The County Clinic was held at Taunton and any children requiring attention are sent there by appointment.

SECTION C

Prevention of and control over Infectious Diseases and Other Diseases

Reference to Appendix C, Table 1 will show details of all infectious diseases notified during the year. There was an epidemic of measles but I am pleased to say that there were many fewer cases of whooping cough than in preceding years. There were no cases of A.P.M. but this year we did have a few cases of infective jaundice in the town. This is not a notifiable disease but the general practitioners were kind enough to let me have some details of cases occurring in their practices.

Mass Miniature Radiography Service

The Mass Radiography Unit assembled in Chard on 31st December and details of the visit will be shown in the next report. The regular visits of this Unit are appreciated by the people of Chard and the surrounding district and the numbers attending are increasing. B.C.G. immunisation is to be available for particular categories of persons who are exposed to infection, e.g., nurses, medical students and tuberculous negative contacts. One of the best methods of prevention of tuberculosis is good housing. I am pleased to say that Chard Borough Council is fully aware of this fact and has made special efforts to ensure that all cases on the Register requiring re-housing have received priority.

SECTION D

Environmental Health Services

A—Sanitary Circumstances

Climate

It was an extremely wet year and the figures for rainfall were well above the average.

Water Supply

Owing to heavy rainfall there was no shortage during the year and the quality was satisfactory. Owing to the unsatisfactory source of supply, Chard is always liable to shortage in periods of dry weather and with this in mind the Council are now pressing for a new scheme to obtain a supply adequate for the needs of the town. The cost of this scheme will be in the region of £33,000 but is essential if the demands of industry and domestic users are to be met in the future. Regular sampling took place during the year and in all cases the results were satisfactory.

Drainage and Sewage

The new works are now working very satisfactorily and regular sampling during the year has shown that the effluent is of a high standard. The extension to the effluent drain was completed and I hope this puts an end to an unhappy chapter in the public health work of the town.

Public Cleansing

Weekly removal of refuse was carried out in the town. The roads were kept in an excellent state of cleanliness and are a credit to the Public Health Department.

Paper collection has continued but many manufacturers now sell paper privately so that a reduced amount finds its way to the Council. However, it has been a profitable undertaking, no doubt as the prices for paper falls so the private collection and sale of paper will diminish with the result that the Council will be given a good deal more and probably not lose so much revenue as might be expected.

Rodent Destruction

Regular survey work and test baiting

of sewers was carried out throughout the year. A large scale combined treatment was carried out at the Railway premises, Wyatt's Mills and the slaughter house in conjunction with private directors and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. There were 216 baiting points and the result was very satisfactory.

Factories Act

Details will be found in Appendix D, Table 1.

B—Housing

Complete details of the progress made during the year and the present position of the Council houses and requirements will be found in Appendix D, Table 2. The year was an important one for it marked the disappearance of Furnham Camp. This old Army camp in which squatters have been living since 1945, was a black spot in Chard and the re-housing of the dwellers there has been a very difficult problem for the Council. Happily, with the aid of an extra allocation of houses, the last people on the site were re-housed and in their place new Council houses are going up rapidly. The ones already in occupation are Cornish Unit type prefabricated houses. They are built on Dutch barn design and are of very pleasing appearance, suitable for this type of town. It will be seen that the proportion of Council owned houses is increasing. This is obviously going to become uneconomic unless the rate of privately owned houses is increased and it is hoped that before long the Ministry will allow more private enterprise licenses.

C—Inspection and Supervision of Food

Milk

There are eight registered dairy premises and one registered distributor in the area. Three supplementary licenses were issued to distributors whose dairies are outside the area.

Ice Cream

There are twelve premises registered for the sale of ice cream. All conform to the standard required, eleven retail pre-packed ice cream and one manufactures and sells on the premises. Twenty samples were taken during the year all of which fell into Grade One or Two.

Meat

Regular meat inspection was carried out by the Sanitary Inspector throughout the year, details of which will be found in Appendix D, Table 3. Bye-laws under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, came into operation on 5th January, 1951. Since that time it has not been found necessary to take any action but regular inspection has been carried out.

APPENDIX A—TABLE 1

Registrar General's estimate of population mid 1951	5,251
Area	1,291 acres
Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1951 according to the Rate Book	1,620
Rateable Value	£31,230
Sum represented by a penny rate	£120

APPENDIX A—TABLE 2

BIRTH RATE: Chard, 1951		M	F
Live Births:	Total	47	25
	Legitimate	44	22
	Illegitimate	3	3
Still Births:	Total	1	—
	Legitimate	1	—
	Illegitimate	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year:	Total	2	—
	Legitimate	2	—
	Illegitimate	—	—

APPENDIX A—TABLE 3

Chard, 1951.

TABLE OF DEATHS:	Total	M	F
Death Rate: 14.7 per thousand.	76	33	43
Causes of Death:			
Tuberculosis	6	4	2
Heart disease	14	5	9
Circulatory Diseases	11	6	5
Cancer (all forms)	12	4	8
Respiratory Diseases (excluding Tuberculosis)	7	5	2
Other Diseases (ill defined)	26	9	17

APPENDIX B—TABLE 1

CHARD CHILD WELFARE CENTRE

Statistics for the twelve months ended 31st December, 1951.

1.	Number of children who first attended during the year and who on the first attendance were:—	
	(a) Under 1 year of age	62
	(b) Over 1 year of age	20
2.	Number of children in attendance at the end of the year (at the December Sessions only) who were then:—	
	(a) Under 1 year of age	37
	(b) Over 1 year of age	82
3.	Number of children who attended the Centre during the year	183
4.	Total attendances during the year made by:—	
	(a) Children under 1 year	381
	(b) Children over 1 year	450
	(c) Mothers	705
5.	Average attendances per session of:—	
	(a) Children under 1 year	15.8
	(b) Children over 1 year	18.7
	(c) Mothers	29.4
6.	Number of individual mothers who attended during the year	152
7.	Total number of sessions held:—	
	(a) With Medical Officer	23
	(b) Other sessions	1
	(c) Number of children examined by Doctor	133
	(d) Total number of medical consultations	302
8.	Immunisations	50
9.	Vaccinated	36

APPENDIX B—TABLE 2.

HOME NURSING

Villages covered by Chard District Nurses:— Chard Borough, Combe St. Nicholas, Wambrook, Chaffcombe, Knowle St. Giles, Cricket Malherbie.

Infants born:—	(a) At Home	42
	(b) In Hospital	38
Approximate number of visits to homes		6,628

APPENDIX B—TABLE 3.

Use made of the Chard Ambulances during the year.

Mileage 9,022

Patients conveyed			
Accident	Emergency Removals	Non-emergency	Total
21	147	246	414

APPENDIX B—TABLE 4

CHARD SCHOOLS

Name of School	No. Inspected	No. Immunised	Date of Inspection	Date of last Dental Inspection	Children having milk	Children having dinners
Chard Infants ...	75		30/ 5/51	Feb., 1949	100.00%	50.00%
Chard Junior ...	95		27/ 6/51	Sept. 1949	80.07%	59.43%
Chard Nursery ...	22		12/ 2/51	Dec., 1948	100.00%	100.00%
	14		20/ 7/51		100.00%	100.00%
	21		4/12/51		100.00%	100.00%
Chard Secondary Modern	58		9/ 5/51	July, 1949	55.21%	30.62%
	70		28/11/51		44.32%	41.52%
Total ...	355					

APPENDIX C—TABLE 1

Infectious Diseases

Erysipelas	2
Scarlet Fever	1
Meningococcal Infection	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	2
Acute Influenzal Pneumonia	3
Measles	193
Whooping Cough	9
Abortus Fever	1
Septic Abortion	1

Analysis of Cases Notified.

Chard Borough.	Under 1yr.	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65+	Age Unknown
Measles	4	18	22	31	33	80	2	1	1				1
Whooping Cough		2	2	2		2							1

Tuberculosis

	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
Age Group	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
-1 ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5 ...	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—
5-15 ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15-25 ...	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
25-35 ...	3	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
35-45 ...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
45-55 ...	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
55-65 ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
65+ ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Age Unknown	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—

APPENDIX D—TABLE 1

Factories Act, 1937

Inspections for the purpose of provisions as to Health (Including Inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector)

Premises	No. on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	33	11	2	—
Other premises in which Sect. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Outworkers premises) ...	22	6	2	—
TOTAL	55	17	4	—

Number of cases in which defects were found

Particulars	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector
Insufficient Sanitary conveniences ...	3	2		1

APPENDIX D—TABLE 2.

Housing.

	Houses erected during the year		Houses in course of erection		Conversion to flats or dwellings		Temporary such as Army huts, etc.	
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.		
Local Authority	23	—	33	—	—	—	—	—
Private Enterprise ...	10	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	33	—	34	—	—	—	—	—

Inclusive of those above built during the year.

Total number of houses in District 1,630

Total number of houses owned by Local Authority 256

No. of post war houses erected to 31st December, 1951.

	By Local Authority	By Private Enterprise
	158	44
Programme for 1952 ...	74	18

(a) No. of unfit houses in the District but on which no formal action has been taken 81

(b) No. of houses that have been condemned under the Housing Acts as totally unfit 37

(c) No. of houses occupied under (a)...81; under (b)...19

(d) No. of houses found overcrowded..... 17

Houses required

(i) To replace those unfit under (a)...65; under (b)...37

(ii) To abate overcrowding 17

(iii) To overcome unsatisfactory conditions, e.g.: two families living in same house but not included in (i) or (ii) 68

Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year ... 291

APPENDIX D—TABLE 3

Slaughter-houses

No. in use under Ministry of Food 1

No. in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption 0

Total number of animals slaughtered during the year:—

Cattle	2,495
Sheep	5,409
Pigs	485
Calves	1,868

Approximate weight of meat condemned:—

For Tuberculosis	7,760 lbs.
Other	3,440 lbs.